

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (cancelled)

2 (Currently amended). An isolated polynucleotide encoding ~~the a~~ hyperthermostable protease comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1 or functional equivalent thereof according to claim 1.

3 (Original). The polynucleotide according to claim 2, which comprises the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

4 (Currently amended). ~~The~~ An isolated polynucleotide encoding a hyperthermostable protease ~~gene according to claim 2, which polynucleotide~~ hybridizes to ~~the polynucleotide comprising~~ the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein hybridization is carried out by incubating in 6XSSC at 50°C and washing with 2XSSC at 37°C.

5 (Original). A method for preparing a hyperthermostable protease, comprising culturing a transformant containing the polynucleotide of claim 2, and harvesting a hyperthermostable protease from the culture.

Claim 6 (Cancelled)

7 (Currently amended). An isolated polynucleotide encoding ~~the a~~ hyperthermostable protease ~~or a functional~~

~~equivalent thereof according to claim 6 comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:6.~~

8 (Original). The polynucleotide according to claim 7, which comprises the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:6.

9 (Currently amended). ~~The~~An isolated polynucleotide encoding a hyperthermostable protease according to claim 7, which polynucleotide hybridizes to the polynucleotide comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:6, wherein hybridization is carried out by incubating in 6XSSC at 50°C and washing with 2XSSC at 37°C.

10 (Original). A method for preparing a hyperthermostable protease, comprising culturing a transformant containing the polynucleotide of claim 7, and harvesting a hyperthermostable protease gene from the culture.

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11 (New). A method for preparing a hyperthermostable protease, comprising culturing a transformant containing the polynucleotide of claim 4, and harvesting a hyperthermostable protease from the culture.

12 (New). A method for preparing a hyperthermostable protease, comprising culturing a transformant containing the polynucleotide of claim 9, and harvesting a hyperthermostable protease gene from the culture.

IN THE SEQUENCE LISTING

Please substitute the attached Sequence Listing section
for the lasted filed Sequence Listing.